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ABSTRACT

Policy strategies implemented at the State University of New York in response to enrollment decline and financial cutbacks are considered. The following areas are addressed: institutional mission, administrative organization, enrollment plan, method of reallocating resources, a systematic program for staff development, program evaluation, personnel evaluation, and governance. Revision of the campus master plan set as a primary goal the development of a new and comprehensive general education program. An administrative reorganization reduced the faculties from five to two by combining humanities, social science, and science and mathematics into a single faculty of Arts and Science and by joining professional and general studies. The reorganization also extended to the central administration of the college. A new model forecasts enrollments by academic program, and a five-year plan forecasts both enrollments and staffing levels for current and projected academic programs. The college's study of its impact on students has aided in the revision of general education, review of course requirements for majors, and extracurricular improvements. (SW)

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Trying To Do Better With Less:

The Experience of the SUNY College of Arts and Science at Plattsburgh, New York

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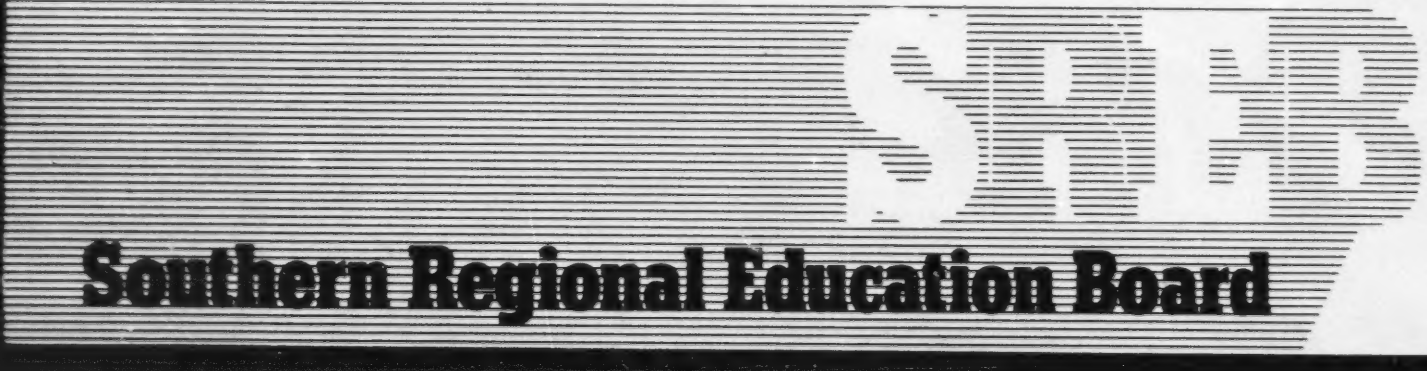

Trying To Do Better With Less: The Experience of the SUNY College of Arts and Science at Plattsburgh, New York

Joseph C. Burke*

The State University of New York at Plattsburgh is an arts and science unit of the SUNY system. The college, located in the Lake Champlain area of northeastern New York not far from the Canadian border, offers baccalaureate and master's level programs and enrolls about 6,000 students. As part of an SREB study, staff visited Plattsburgh to conduct one of a series of case studies examining the public policy strategies in response to enrollment decline and financial cutbacks. Attracted by its reputation as a well-managed institution, the staff found a college actively applying a range of planning tools to deal with a "no-growth" circumstance in a positive way.

The greatest challenge to this country in the Eighties is how to live "better" with "less." Our history and our habits have not prepared us for this task. Our past as a nation has taught us to equate progress with plenty; and our practices as a people have accustomed us to confuse quantity with quality. Though rich in theories of growth and development, we lack a single word for "less" or "fewer" that has a positive connotation. Shedding this past and "kicking" this habit will be difficult, but essential, if we as a nation and a people are to survive and prosper.

Though this challenge concerns every American and all our institutions, society has particular reason to expect an imaginative response from academia. Voices from the campus have long decried the dominance in our society of the materialistic ethic of "more" and have often denounced the national tendency to equate quantity with quality. Society looks to colleges and universities for models of institutions whose quality and viability are not dependent on growth.

So far, society has looked largely in vain. Critics of academia can charge gleefully that we have not practiced what we have preached for others. We, too, have become addicted to "bigness" and have acquired the habit of growth, to the extent that we behave as if our institutions cannot live without it. Though we speak and write about quality in higher education, all too often, we judge colleges and universities by the number of students and staffs and the size of campuses and buildings.

Growth may no longer be possible for most colleges and universities. The "more" of the Sixties and early Seventies is over for the foreseeable future. The new era in higher education will feature level or lower budgets, constant or declining enrollments, and stable or reduced staffs. While resources will level or diminish, demands on colleges and universities will continue to increase, for the aspirations and expectations of students and society have never been chained to budgetary exigencies. Though the "more" of the Sixties and early Seventies will be gone, the habit of having more will linger.

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* *Joseph C. Burke, president of SUNY College of Arts and Science at Plattsburgh, New York, gave this presentation at SREB's 1980 Legislative Work Conference.*

Meeting new and escalating demands in a period of restrained resources will demand novel ways of thinking and new methods of operating that will permit colleges and universities to do not "more" but "better" with "less."

The term "steady-state" has been used to describe an institution of higher education that can expect no growth in enrollments or funds. But even when funding and enrollment remain constant, the so-called steady-state college or university will remain stable only on the surface, in terms of the total size of its budget and student body. Beneath this surface, programs and activities, along with the personnel to staff them and the resources to support them, must expand and contract in tune with changing needs, if an institution is to survive and succeed. New programs to satisfy new needs must be staffed and financed by corresponding reductions in existing programs. The challenge of the Eighties calls not for the creation of a steady-state college or university but for the development of a dynamic and diversified institution whose ability to respond to the changing needs of students and society is not dependent on growth.

If a college or university is to remain diversified and dynamic, its response to the programmatic demands of students and society must be measured and modified by a firm commitment to an institutional mission, tailored to the talents of its particular faculty and the needs of its potential students. It should not respond to every momentary whim of student interest or programmatic fad. It must resist abandoning disciplines that students and society desperately need but temporarily do not want. A college or university must remain capable of assuring continuity as well as accommodating change. It must blend these two elements into a unique mission responding to the changing demands of students and society, while maintaining an institutional integrity and sense of identity.

In 1975, I outlined, in a speech to the faculty at Plattsburgh State, what I believe are the major requirements of such a dynamic and diversified institution.

1. **Mission.** A clear mission based on the legitimate needs of the students and society to be served, given the talents and expertise of the staff.

2. **Organization.** An administrative organization designed for husbanding resources rather than coping with growth.

3. **Enrollment.** An enrollment plan aimed at a realistic number and quality of students.

4. **Reallocation.** A rational method of reallocating internal resources among programs and activities to meet changing student and societal needs.

5. **Staff Development.** A systematic program for staff development that assists faculty and other professionals to expand and shift their expertise to satisfy new institutional and personal priorities.

6. **Program Evaluation.** A comprehensive system for measuring the quality and cost of programs and activities that will permit decisions to be made on a cost/benefit basis.

7. **Personnel Evaluation.** An evaluation system for faculty, staff, and administrators based on clear expectations, on high standards of performance, and on a process that encourages candid and fair assessments.

8. **Governance.** A governance system that guarantees both timely decisions and wide participation in the decision-making process.

These requirements became my agenda for the college at Plattsburgh during the last five years. I think they provide an agenda for any college or university that wants to succeed, as well as survive, in the Eighties. Perhaps the experience of one Northern college in grappling with these requirements in the late Seventies will prove useful to many Southern institutions when they face similar problems in the Eighties.

"Meeting new and escalating demands in a period of restrained resources will demand novel ways of thinking and new methods of operating that will permit colleges and universities to do not 'more' but 'better' with 'less.' "

In many ways, the development of Plattsburgh State in the late Sixties and early Seventies was typical of colleges and universities throughout the country. Growth was good for Plattsburgh State. The college was transformed from a small, single purpose, teacher-training institution into a medium-sized, comprehensive college of 5,000 students by 1973. The college offered a full range of liberal arts disciplines and a growing number of professional programs for undergraduates and provided selected graduate studies at the master's level. Its programmatic changes had been dramatic and swift. Most of the liberal arts disciplines developed in the middle and late Sixties, and many of the professional programs began in the early Seventies. Growth had become the mission of the college. It expected to grow bigger and more comprehensive by adding more students, more programs, and more staff. The college was scheduled to double its student body by 1980. No one questioned the inevitability of this enrollment growth or the additional funds to be generated.

The fiscal crisis of New York State and a fierce competition for students destroyed both assumptions. The college suffered a large enrollment decline in 1973 and a huge budget cut in 1974. Though the enrollment decline proved a temporary phenomenon, budget cuts became an annual problem. In the next three years, we lost over 11 percent of our total staff, and our funding increases averaged less than three percent a year, a rate that badly trailed inflation. The budget crunch came at the worst possible time. Recent shifts in the academic and career interests of students demanded the rapid expansion of some existing programs and the introduction of new fields of study. New and expanding programs required additional funding and staffing in a period when we had to cut drastically both the budget and the number of authorized positions.

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Mission

Fiscal constraints forced an agonizing reappraisal of our mission. Our campus had to define a mission that encompassed not what the faculty individually would like to do most but what they collectively could do best, given the available resources and the needs of our students and region. A revision of the campus master plan in 1975 ranked every academic program on the following characteristics, using a scale of high-average-low: program cost; placement opportunities; student interests; and, most important of all, campus priority. The plan identified eight academic areas for special emphasis, based on current quality and projected demand: art, biological science, business, Canadian studies, home economics, natural sciences, nursing, and psychology. It also proposed several new degree programs to meet the future needs of our students and our region.

The master plan concluded that general education for all students had been badly neglected in a period of rapid expansion of specialized majors. It set as a primary goal the development of a new and comprehensive general education program, tailored to the talents of our faculty and the needs of our students. (Four years later, the college implemented a new general education program.) The master plan also challenged the campus community to view instruction, research, and public service as interrelated rather than conflicting functions. It predicted that more teachers would use the discovery method, with faculty and students searching collectively for answers to real problems. It urged the study of the particular problems of northeastern New York State, which it identified as our special service area. This acceptance of a regional role for research and service was striking. It broke what I call "Burke's Law," which says that the research interest of most faculty members is in direct proportion to the distance of the research subject from their campus. This decision was especially appropriate for a college located in northeastern New York, a rural region that desperately needed an intellectual, cultural, and informational center.

The decisions contained in the master plan demanded hard choices from a large committee of administrators, faculty, and students. Without the external impetus of a master plan revision which was mandated by the state, these decisions might never have been made or accepted by the college community.

Organization

The budget cuts demanded a new administrative organization designed for husbanding resources rather than managing growth. Most colleges and universities coped with growth in the Sixties and early Seventies by adopting a decentralized stucture. They created semi-autonomous colleges, schools, or faculties headed by administrators who were allowed to operate almost as presidents of their units. Though the central administration of most colleges and universities added a host of provosts and vice presidents, along with an army of associates and assistants, to bring a measure of unity to this planned diversity, most institutions operated as weak confederations of semi-independent units. Professors, administrators, and students owed allegiance to their college, school, or faculty rather than to the institution as a whole.

> *". . . in times of fiscal constraints and declining or shifting enrollments, the central administration must have the capacity to manage creatively all resources for the good of the institution as a whole."*

The advent of a new era of restricted resources, limited and shifting enrollments, and diminished staffs demanded a different organization, at Plattsburgh as elsewhere. In previous years, launching new programs had little or no impact on existing fields of study, for rising enrollments generated additional positions and funds. Reallocation was seldom mentioned and rarely used, especially across faculty boundaries. The end to growth in enrollments, funds, and positions left internal reallocation as the only source of support for new and expanding programs. This development inevitably spread the impact of program and personnel decisions in a single department or faculty across the entire campus. The five faculty divisions (humanities; social science; science and mathematics; professional studies; and general studies) also hampered the development of academic programs. Negotiating new majors or interdisciplinary concentrations that crossed faculty lines rivaled in complexity and controversy the settlement of the "Middle East Crisis." These artificial barriers also hindered the much needed review and revision of general education, since they fragmented the academic community personally and professionally as well as programmatically.

If the above considerations provided long-range reasons for reorganization, a heavy budget cut in the first year of my presidency produced an immediate cause for implementation. The new structure reduced the faculties from five to two by combining humanities, social science, and science and mathematics into a single faculty of Arts and Science and by joining professional and general studies. This change eliminated the positions of two academic deans and two associate deans. It also permitted the appointment of a dean of graduate studies and research, to provide coordination for graduate programs and to expand research activities, especially sponsored research.

The reorganization also extended to the central administration of the college. We eliminated the following management positions within two years: three assistants to the president, an executive secretary to the president, and an assistant vice president for student affairs. These nine administrative lines were substituted for mandated budget reductions in teaching faculty. This response to the first of several budget cuts demonstrated our determination to cut teaching faculty only as a last

resort. When the need to eliminate teaching lines came later, this first response avoided the perennial complaint that faculty always suffer more than the administration in budget cuts.

The reorganization helped the college at Plattsburgh to absorb budget reductions; but, more important, it provided an administrative structure suited to husbanding of scarce resources. Though much can be said for decentralization of authority in colleges and universities, in times of fiscal constraints and declining or shifting enrollments, the central administration must have the capacity to manage creatively all resources for the good of the institution as a whole. Indeed, I believe such an organization is no less effective for planning growth than it is for managing decline.

Enrollment

The growing competition for students in the face of a declining pool of 18 to 22 year olds requires colleges and universities to reassess their enrollment expectations. Each campus must plan only for the number and quality of students that it can realistically enroll. Though the size of the problem will vary by institution and region, all schools should review, and probably revise, their enrollment plans. Even institutions in those states with swelling populations will not remain totally immune from the problem. The college at Plattsburgh had to face an enrollment problem earlier than many institutions, for the projected decline in the student pool has already hit New York State.

Enrollment involves recruiting new, and retaining current, students. At Plattsburgh, we have tried to improve both recruitment and retention. We first wanted to reduce the costly practice of recruiting qualified students only to have them "drop out" during the first year, often in the first few weeks or months. On the other hand, we sought to avoid the temptation of retaining students by lowering academic standards. Such a course is impractical, as well as academically unsound; research demonstrates that good students often leave school because they have not been sufficiently challenged. To avoid the temptation to lower standards, the administration collects and reviews annually the average grades given by each department. It also compiles and analyzes the attrition rate for the college as a whole, as well as for each of its academic programs. These studies have helped us to improve retention significantly in a period when the number of students dismissed for academic reasons has increased slightly.

Proceeding on the evidence of national and local research that as much as 25 percent of a typical freshman class "drop out," we concentrated on helping new students to adjust to academic and campus life. We concluded that the usual orientation held just prior to the start of classes in the fall was too impersonal, too crowded, and too boring for new students. The college now invites all new students to campus in groups of no more than a hundred for a two-day orientation in the summer. A carefully selected group of upper class students, and faculty and staff conduct group and individual sessions on the academic, cultural, and social life of the college.

National and local research also indicated that the most crucial factor in student satisfaction is personal contact with a faculty member. In response, we introduced a special seminar program for freshmen, led by volunteer faculty and administrators.

Recent research isolates poor advisement as a culprit in student attrition. Realizing that the large numbers of students per faculty constitutes a major problem, we are encouraging all non-teaching professionals, including top administrators, to have advisees. In addition to advising in departments with high student/faculty ratios, these professionals will concentrate on students who have not selected a major – a group particularly susceptible to attrition.

Of course, recruitment is also essential to enrollment. Planning must precede recruitment; and planning must begin with research. Six years ago, we instituted a detailed survey of all new students that explores the reasons for their choice of our college. For the last three years, our students have given as their top three reasons: availability of academic programs, academic reputation, and geographic location. Surveys of seniors showed that our students especially liked the size of the college. They felt it was small enough to encourage friendliness, yet large enough to offer a wide range of quality programs and activities.

This information on student perceptions shaped our planning for mission, enrollment, and recruitment. We decided to maintain and even increase our range of degree programs, while retaining a balance of enrollment among majors. We concluded that the rural character of our region represented a real asset, especially for students from urban areas. Student comments on the size and quality of the college led us to emphasize quality over quantity in our enrollment plan. Our admissions staff and our recruitment publications stressed the size, friendliness of the campus, the quality of life in our region, the range of programs and activities, and the expertise and interests of our faculty.

"Recruiting students has proven less difficult than projecting, and planning for, their programmatic choices among majors."

Recruiting students has proven less difficult than projecting, and planning for, their programmatic choices among majors. The changing interests of students have forced us to devise a more complex model for projecting enrollments. The old method started with the desired enrollment figure for the college, estimated the number of continuing students, and then simply admitted the needed amount of new students, without regard to their choice of majors. The new model forecasts enrollments

by academic program. These forecasts led to enrollment limits on accounting, business, nursing, and special education. Next year, computer science and mass media will receive similar limits. We hoped that these enrollment caps would preserve the balance between the liberal arts and professional studies and keep the staffing needs of growing programs from exceeding our capacity to provide position, primarily through reallocation.

Clearly, we have failed. Our recruitment worked too well. Since 1973, our enrollment has grown by more than 17 percent to nearly 6,000 full-time-equivalent students. Unfortunately, too many of those additional students are majoring in fields with exorbitant student/faculty ratios. Meanwhile, budget cuts and enrollment increases have left the college underfunded and overenrolled. We hope to solve this problem by a planned reduction in total enrollment of 400 students over five years. The reduction will be accomplished by lowering the enrollment levels even further in several of our most popular majors.

Given past practices in state funding, this reduction in enrollment risks the possibility of budget cuts, even though our funding and staffing ratios are among the lowest in the SUNY system.

States should minimize such risks. They should develop new funding and staffing formulae that would encourage realistic enrollment planning and internal reallocation. These formulae should seek to take the "profit out of growth" and to "cushion" the impact of planned reductions.

Reallocation

A rational plan for reallocation represents a "must" for a vital college or university. Programmatic shifts of students, primarily in the early Seventies, had produced great inequities in staffing among academic departments. Often these variations owed more to historical accidents than to disciplinary needs. Enrollment had moved dramatically from traditional fields to popular new programs. For example, majors at Plattsburgh in elementary and secondary education had plummeted from 21 percent of the college total in 1973 to 10 percent in 1977. In the same period, business and accounting majors had soared from 8 percent to 20 percent; and those in environmental science, a program started in 1974, had climbed to 7 percent. Only the size of these shifts makes them atypical. By the fall of 1979, 40 percent of our students majored in programs that had not existed eight years earlier.

To bring staffing ratios more in line with changing enrollments, we instituted a formal reallocation system in 1974. All vacancies went into a central pool, whether they arose from retirements, resignations, or end of term contracts. Each year, departments presented their cases to retain or add positions from the pool. Between 1974 and 1977, this process took 23 faculty lines from departments with comparatively low student/faculty ratios. Unfortunately, mandated budget cuts eliminated 9.5 of these positions, leaving only 13.5 for reallocation.

Even this substantial shift failed to staff the growing programs adequately. The annual reallocation process also produced unintended side effects. It played havoc with planning, since departments never knew whether, or when, they might gain or lose positions. This uncertainty produced great anxiety among junior faculty who lived in constant fear that their positions might be reallocated at the end of their current contract. In addition,

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vacancies often occurred during the summer, which left insufficient time to find and attract qualified candidates in fields where rising enrollments made faculty recruitment a difficult problem. This approach also depended upon the random occurrence of vacancies rather than upon the real and timely needs of the departments. Finally, the reallocation pool "ran dry" after three years of extensive use. The comparative youth of our faculty meant few retirements; and resignations came almost exclusively in academic fields where rising enrollments demanded replacement rather than reallocation.

To remedy these defects, we prepared a five-year plan that forecast both enrollments and staffing levels for current and projected academic programs through fiscal 1982-83. The plan attempted to remove the uncertainty and the weaknesses inherent in the annual reallocation process and sought to make reallocation more rational and less painful by spreading over five years the transfer of positions from underenrolled to overenrolled programs. The time span allowed the fullest use of both retirements and resignations, which cushioned the impact on current faculty.

Current as well as projected enrollments demonstrated the need for the plan. In 1977, 10 programs scheduled to lose positions had a collective student/faculty ratio of 17.4 to one, while eight that would gain them had a ratio of 28 to one.

The plan also attempted to diminish the scramble by departments for enrollments solely to keep or increase their faculty. Since staffing levels by discipline were set for five years, growing departments would gain nothing by obtaining more students than those projected in the plan. Departments with declining enrollments would know that the plan had considered this factor when it set the size of their faculty.

Much has been written about the merits of retrenching entire degree programs as a means of producing faculty lines for reallocation. A careful analysis of poten-

tial costs and benefits on our campus led us to reject this course. Most of our departments with low student/faculty ratios were in the traditional liberal arts, where 90 percent or more of their enrollments flowed from service courses for non-majors. Elimination of the major in one or more of these disciplines would have produced few lines for reallocation. Moreover, retrenchment of such programs would have upset the delicate balance between the liberal arts and professional programs and would have eroded an important area of liberal learning required for the quality education of all our students. We chose program reduction rather than program retrenchment. However, when reallocation reduced staffing below the "critical mass" of faculty required for a quality major, the program was retrenched.

Staff Development

Faculty development and retraining is decidedly preferable to reallocation when quality professors in underenrolled programs can acquire expertise in related areas with high student demand. It also has the advantage of maintaining flexibility, a crucial commodity in an age of shifting student interests. It enables departments with low enrollments to continue offering quality programs for fewer students, with part of their faculty teaching in other fields, while retaining the capacity to reverse the process, should student interest revive in their disciplines.

Faculty development seems essential in an era when even the most devoted specialists must concede the interrelatedness of knowledge and issues. Educators cannot claim to study fully, much less solve, a single problem facing a city, a state, the country, or the world, with the expertise included in an isolated discipline. The problems, both pure and applied, in teaching, research, and service frequently fall between the disciplines. Certainly, the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive general education program requires faculty who can bridge the gaps between the disciplines.

"It seems incongruous that state universities should have the mission of saving everyone from 'professional obsolescence' except their own faculty and staff."

Unfortunately, the natural limitations of faculty development may equal its obvious advantages. These limitations often confine it to minor shifts within subdivisions of a discipline or to cognate fields. Despite these restrictions, faculty development should be encouraged for what it can offer rather than be criticized for what it cannot deliver.

The college at Plattsburgh has given a high priority to the full utilization and further development of the multi- and interdisciplinary expertise of its faculty. First, the college attempts to hire faculty with a breadth of expertise. Second, the administration gives preference to leave requests that involve retraining. Third, in conjunction with the state university system, external funding for retraining has been obtained from private sources to expand our capacity to staff new and developing programs with our current faculty.

"The executive and legislative branches of state governments should resist pressures . . . to increase 'across-the-board' raises at the expense of increments based on merit, not seniority."

State governments could encourage such programs by setting aside a small sum of money for retraining grants and by insisting that participating campuses provide matching funds. A state could also permit faculty from its public institutions to pursue retraining programs without charge at any of its public universities on a "space available" basis. In many cases, this plan would cost little, since recipients would literally "sit in empty seats" in graduate classrooms. It seems incongruous that state universities should have the mission of saving everyone from "professional obsolescence" except their own faculty and staff.

Program Evaluation

Our college, along with many others, has become increasingly concerned with assessing the effects of our academic and non-academic activities on our students – the so-called "outcomes" of their collegiate experience. Traditionally, program evaluation has assessed mostly "inputs," such as the number of students, staff, and courses, as well as the training, teaching load, and publication record of the faculty. While important, these "inputs" do not measure what actually happened to students during their years in college. Our program evaluation process includes questionnaires and tests for freshmen and seniors, alumni and community attitude surveys, student course evaluations, evaluation by outside experts, and internal reviews by departmental, faculty, and college-wide committees.

We are especially pleased with our "Outcomes Project," which has produced six years of data on the college's impact on our students. A questionnaire for freshmen elicits a wide range of information on their preparation for college and on their general and specific expectations from the college at Plattsburgh. Graduating seniors complete a similar questionnaire that elicits their perceptions of intellectual, personal, social, and vocational growth. Several years of longitudinal analysis have allowed us to compare the original expectations of freshmen with their perceptions of growth as seniors. Each year, academic departments receive a profile of the

expectations and preparation of their incoming majors, along with a composite of the assessment of growth of their graduating seniors. This wealth of information has assisted us in revising general education, in reviewing course requirements in a variety of majors, and in improving our extra-curricular activities and services.

Personnel Evaluation

Though every college and university pays lip service to personnel evaluation in theory, on most campuses its practice falls far short of the announced ideal. The time spent on evaluation appears almost in inverse proportion to the clarity and candor of the recommendations from faculty, and even administrative, committees. All too often, peer groups recommend most of those eligible for promotion and merit, leaving administrators to make crucial decisions without essential faculty input.

Some improvements in this process require action by external bodies. The executive and legislative branches of state governments should resist pressures from unions and employee lobbies to increase "across-the-board" raises at the expense of increments based on merit, not seniority. The lack of sufficient discretionary funds undermines the insistence of administrators that only superior performance warrants promotion or merit increases. State governments should insist that a significant portion of every salary package should go for recognition of merit.

Governance

The problems facing colleges and universities will require a governance system that guarantees both swift decisions and wide participation in the decision-making process. The magnitude of the problems and the need for rapid solutions has overloaded the elaborate governance systems that worked well enough in other times.

> *"State agencies should remove pre-audit controls over expenditures in favor of post-audit appraisals of campus performance."*

The bombardment of crises in the last six years at Plattsburgh State has played havoc with our traditional governance system. Each crisis has demanded a swift response. Often they developed during the summer when most faculty and students were away from campus and the need for quick reactions to external pressures has placed an impossible burden on the consultative process.

Without reciting the details of accommodation to these pressures, it may be useful to list a number of changes at the state level which would help to stimulate both campus leadership and consultation. Multi-year budgets would allow colleges and universities the time and stability to plan their future and manage their resources. The growing maze of rigid rules and regulations stifles creativity. Accountability is best achieved by allowing colleges and universities a reasonable measure of autonomy. Rigid rules and regulations imposed from state capitols ensure only uniformity and mediocrity, not accountability. State agencies should remove pre-audit controls over expenditures in favor of post-audit appraisals of campus performance. Legislatures should encourage institutions to reallocate their own resources

> *"State governments should insist that every public college or university develop a unique plan for the Eighties, shaped by the talents of its staff and the needs of its students and its region."*

by making "lump sum" appropriations. I am not advocating that state governments simply "leave the money on the stump" and pay no attention to how and where colleges and universities spend public funds. State governments should insist that every public college or university develop a unique plan for the Eighties, shaped by the talents of its staff and the needs of its students and its region. State and campus officials should review periodically both the plan itself and the progress toward its goals. Campus administrators should be held strictly accountable not for conforming to routine regulations but for guiding the implementation of their institution's mission.

Conclusion

Though academia has never been short of Cassandras, the soothsayers of gloom and doom appear especially active as higher education enters the last decades of the twentieth century. They see its future as fixed largely by external forces and uncontrollable fate. They believe the persisting problems of plunging enrollments, declining resources, and shifting programmatic demands will doom many, perhaps most, colleges and universities to a crass struggle for survival in a diminishing market of student "consumers." The final report of the Carnegie Foundation on the Advancement of Teaching projects a different, though difficult, future for each of the 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States. The differences will flow not from the absence of common problems but from the quality of the individual institutional responses. To quote from that final report:

> A downward drift in quality, balance, integrity, diversity, [and] dynamism. . .is not only possible – it is quite likely. But it is not required by external events. It is a matter of choice and not just fate. (p. 117)

The Carnegie report brings the burden home to those of us involved with higher education. The fault, if our institutions fail, will lie not in the stars but in ourselves.

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